FIRST Romance

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FIRST Romance magazine

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No.10 DEC

True Love Stories

IN THIS ISSUE

LOVE WAS my DESTROYER

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Contents

FIRST ROMANCE

DEC. 1951

Dear Readers—:

The ideals of love and romance occupy an *extra-special* place in the heart of every girl! the *rapture* of a kiss . . . the *thrill* of a date . . . the *promise* of whispered endearments in the moonlight . . . these are the things all girls —and boys, too—hold dear!

FIRST ROMANCE is dedicated to those ideals, dedicated to the magic moments of *true love!* Romance is the birthright of every girl and every boy in the world . . . romance waits just around the corner for everyone!

Maybe YOU found YOUR FIRST ROMANCE yesterday . . . and your heart remembers! Maybe YOU will find YOUR FIRST ROMANCE tomorrow . . . and your heart is singing in anticipation! Who can tell . . . who can know . . . who can solve the sweetest mystery in all the world? ? ?

That's why the true, straight-from-the-heart stories in FIRST ROMANCE strike such a responsive chord in you. The girls who tell these stories are all real people . . . just like you . . . and so your pulses quicken in strong, understanding sympathy! YOU SHARE THEIR HOPES, THEIR DREAMS, THEIR PROBLEMS, BECAUSE, ROMANCE BELONGS TO YOU, TOO! ! !

In this issue, for example, you'll read "I LOVED HIM TOO MUCH," the exciting, star-spangled story of three circus performers caught in a strange web woven by Fate. You'll *tingle* to the thrills of the Big Top, even while you're *tingling* to the thrill of Charlotte's great, courageous love for Pete—"the daring young man on the flying trapeze!"

You'll meet Ruth in these pages, too, as she tells you how she came to follow the path that was bound to lead her "PAST DISHONOR!" Shy little governess on the outside—seething spitfire inside—that was Ruth! You'll *gasp* at every word of her true, shocking story!

Then there's Pat Knowles, the small-town girl who took a job in Washington, D. C., looking for *romance*—and finding only *heartbreak* instead! You'll cry with Pat for the pain of loving a no-good guy, for the torment of realizing that "LOVE WAS MY DESTROYER!"

Finally, there's the tender, sweet-as-springtime story of Marjory, who found the most precious thing in all the world—true love—and *threw it away!* You won't skip a word of "SONG IN MY HEART."

Each of these girls have known the magic of FIRST ROMANCE. Each of them might be YOU!

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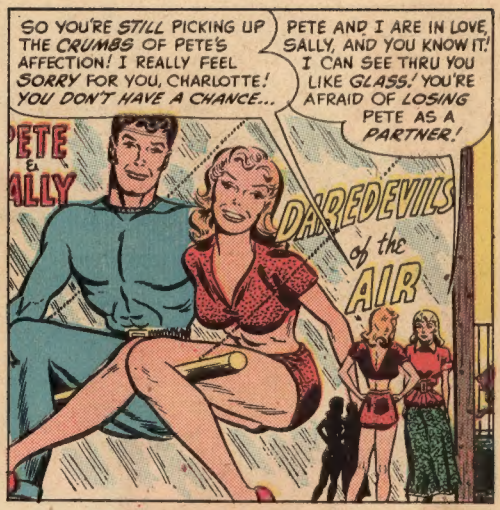
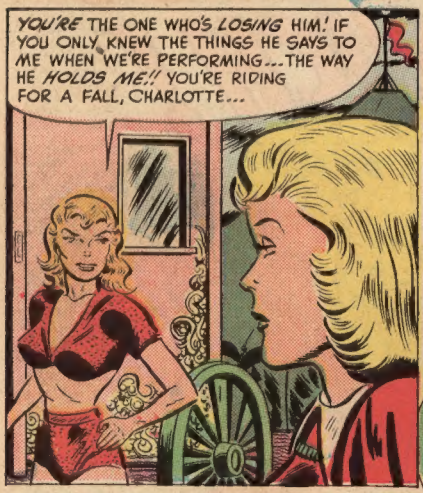
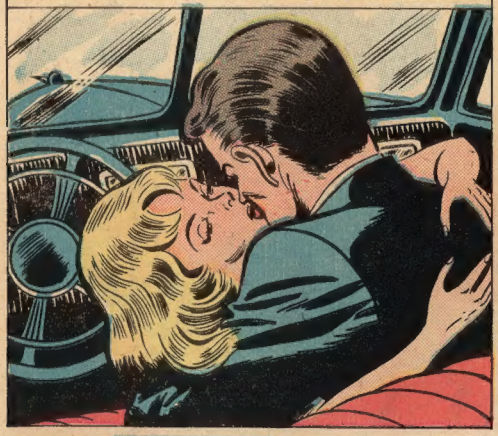
EACH NIGHT I WATCHED PETE MADISON FLIRT WITH DEATH ON A CIRCUS TRAPEZE!! AS HE AND SALLY, HIS PARTNER, TWISTED AND TURNED IN THE AIR, MY ANXIOUS HEART TWISTED AND TURNED WITHIN ME!! JEALOUSY, FEAR, SUFFERING, GUILT... I KNEW THEM ALL, BECAUSE I...
LOVED HIM TOO MUCH!
I CAN'T STAND THIS! I WANT PETE SAFE... AND WITH ME IN HIS ARMS... NOT SALLY!!
OH, DARLING...I-- I GET SO FRIGHTENED EVERY TIME I WATCH YOU! WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO QUIT THIS AWFUL BUSINESS?
NOW, CHARLOTTE, WE'VE BEEN THRU THIS BEFORE! YOU KNOW, I'VE NEVER FALLEN YET-- EXCEPT MAYBE FOR YOU!!
He swept me up in his POWERFUL arms, trying to KISS AWAY MY FEARS... and as my my eyes closed, the distant waves of sound from the crowd beat in my ears like a GENTLE, LULLING SEA...
COME ON, ROSCOE- YOU'RE ALWAYS LATE!!
I WOULDN'T BE LATE IF YOU DIDN'T KEEP MISPLACING THE GREASEPAINT!
A True FIRST Romance Story



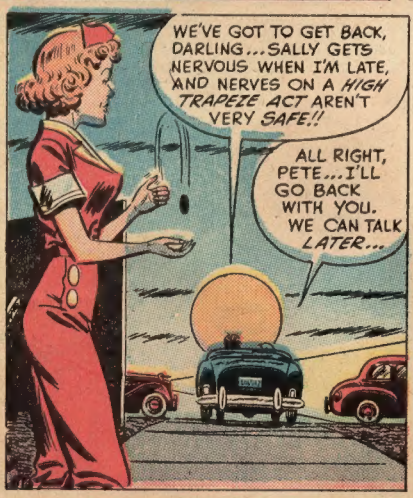


Sally's words ate into my heart like SEARING little drops of ACID!! I didn't WANT to believe what she'd said... but Pete had been promising to quit for MONTHS, and yet he never actually DID! Could SALLY be the reason?

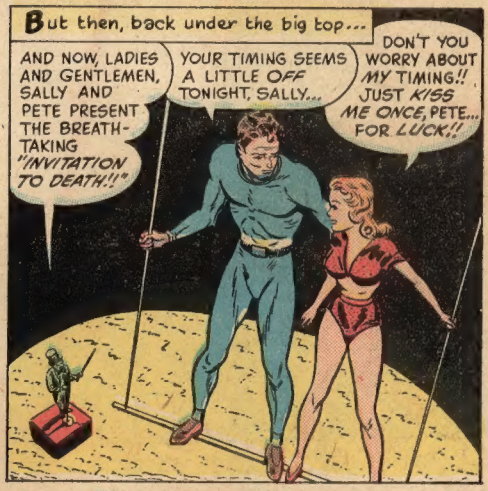
But Pete's only answer was the one with which I could *NEVER* argue! His lips came down on mine insistently, *SILENCING* me, leaving me *BREATHLESS*...



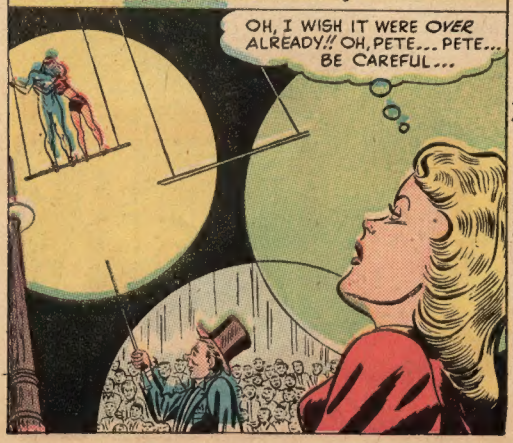
When I was in Pete's arms, I was *OBLIVIOUS* of the world around me! There was only us- in a tight, little *CIRCLE OF LOVE* that nothing could ever penetrate.



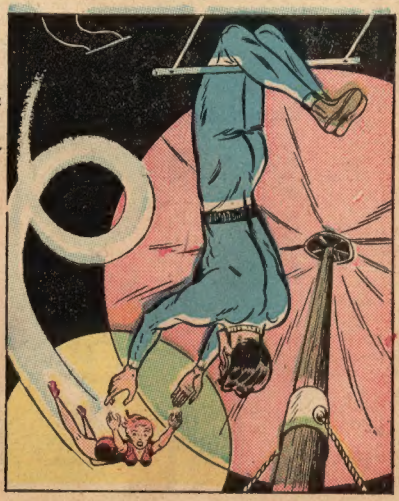
But then, back under the big top...

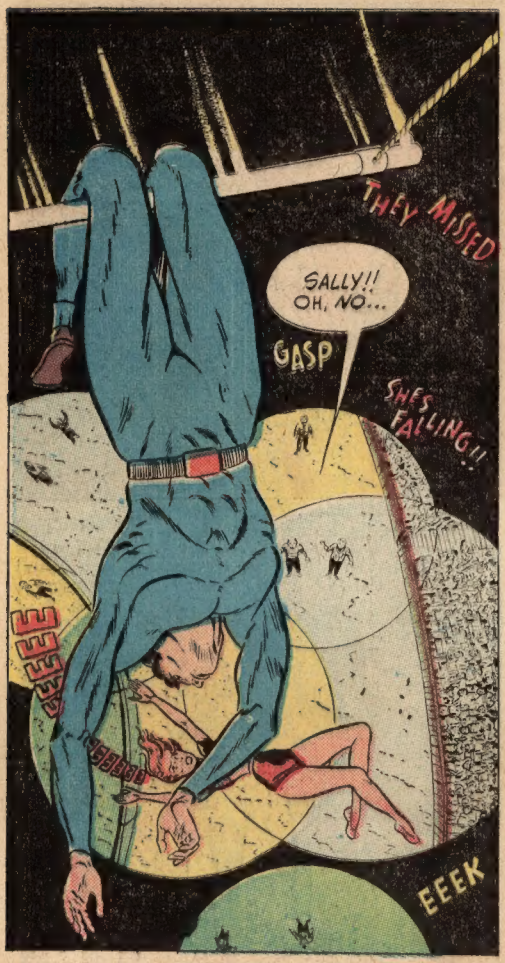


I knew, when Pete kissed Sally, that it was a part of the act! But that didn't make it any *EASIER* to take...

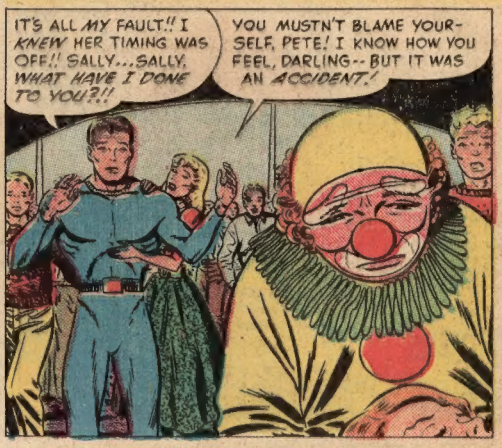


There was a *HUSHED SILENCE* in the big-top as the attendants *REMOVED THE SAFETY NET*, and Pete and Sally started their pre-liminary swings. Then Sally flipped thru the air, a *GASP* rose from the crowd, and...

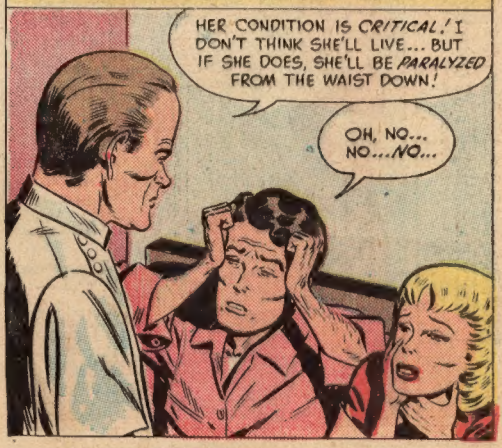




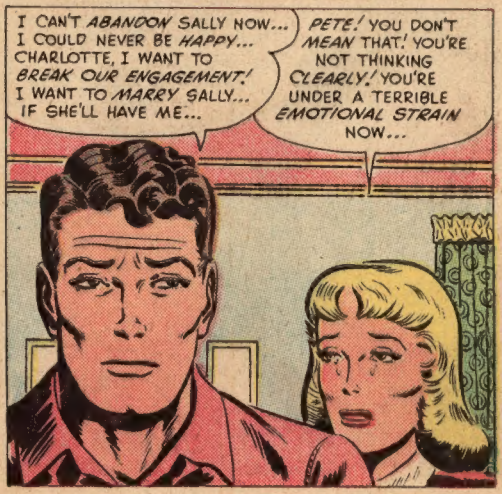
Miraculously, Sally wasn't *KILLED* outright!! She was rushed off to the hospital before Pete could even get to her...



I went with Pete to the hospital...*WAITED* with him for what seemed like *AN ETERNITY*...and then...



We left the hospital and Pete took me home. He was *SILENT* the whole way, and the light was *GONE* from his eyes. I knew in my heart that something *DREADFUL* was going to happen to both of us now...



For several days, I heard NOTHING From Pete, and I couldn't reach HIM! I was nearly OUT OF MY MIND with GRIEF when at last the hospital informed me that Sally could have VISITORS! I went over there and...

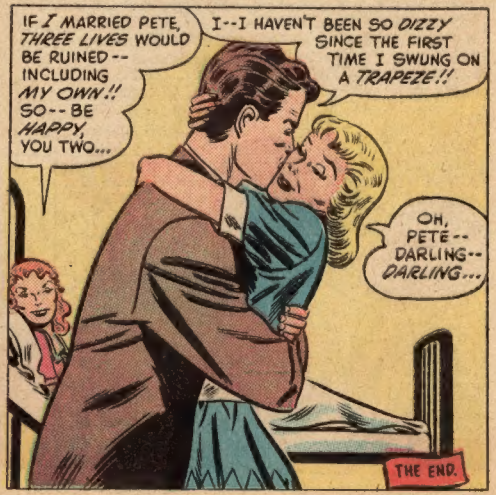
I knew that nothing I could say would soften the HARD look in Sally's triumphant eyes! It all seemed so hopeless, and CRAZY and UNFAIR!! I stumbled out into the corridor BLINDLY, and...

Pete wouldn't even turn around and LOOK AT ME! I wanted to RUN and HIDE and bury my MISERY Forever!! My eyes BURNED with tears I couldn't control— even tho I saw Sally's doctor approaching...

The whole thing was suddenly clear to me! Sally *KNEW* she had a chance to *WALK AGAIN*, but she was going to trap Pete into marriage *FIRST!!* I went back to face her...

The arrangements for the operation were made without Pete *FINDING OUT* a thing! For almost two weeks, I didn't see him or hear from him... two *LONG, HEART-BREAKING* weeks... and then at last...

Though I was sincerely happy for Sally that the operation had been successful, the *RADIANT, JOYFUL* look on her face the next day made me *TREMBLE!!* Had *I LOST* after all???



TORN FOR A *FIERY INSTANT* BETWEEN WHAT I KNEW TO BE *WRONG* AND *RIGHT*, I *RECKLESSLY* ALLOWED MY *WILD IMPULSES* TO MAKE MY DECISION! I CHOSE THE *DANGEROUS WAY*, THE *ILLICIT WAY*, THE WAY THAT COULD ONLY LEAD ME...

PAST DISHONOR

YOU LISTEN TO ME! *KEEP AWAY FROM CARL!!*

WHY DON'T YOU *GIVE UP*, ARTIE? TELL HIM ABOUT *LAST NIGHT*, RUTH!!

LET ME GO, ARTIE!! YOU CAN'T *MAKE* ME LOVE YOU!!

A TRUE FIRST Romance Story

I didn't know at the time that the road to *DANGER* could look so *INNOCENT*! I was *BORED* with my afternoon baby-sitting job, and in the past few days, I had struck up an acquaintance with a rather *GLOOMY* young man...

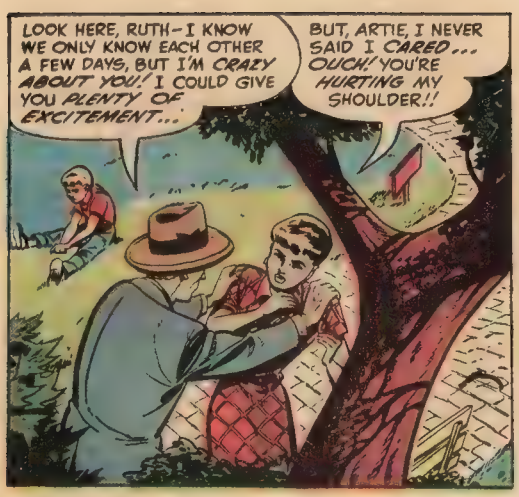
JOHNNIE, BE *CAREFUL*... OH, HELLO, ARTIE - ANY LUCK TODAY?

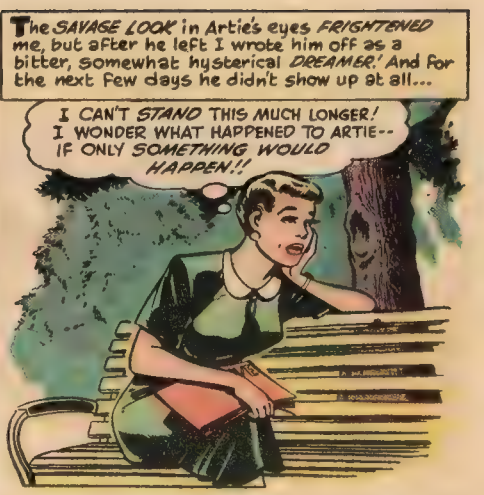
NO - SAME OLD STORY, CAN'T FIND THE *RIGHT JOB*...

KEEP OFF

TALKING TO YOU, EVERY AFTERNOON, HAS BECOME THE *ONLY BRIGHT SPOT* IN MY LIFE. YOU UNDERSTAND..

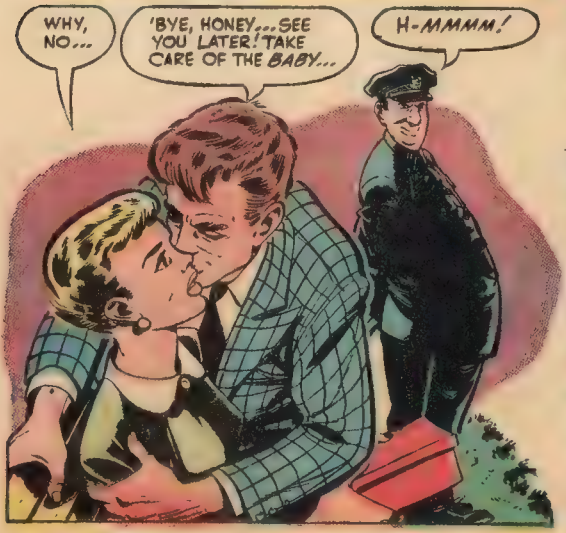
I KNOW *JUST* HOW YOU FEEL! I'M *BORED TO TEARS* WITH THIS JOB! I WISH SOMETHING *EXCITING* WOULD HAPPEN!


LOOK HERE, RUTH - I KNOW WE ONLY KNOW EACH OTHER A FEW DAYS, BUT I'M CRAZY ABOUT YOU! I COULD GIVE YOU PLENTY OF EXCITEMENT...
BUT, ARTIE, I NEVER SAID I CARED... OUCH! YOU'RE HURTING MY SHOULDER!!


The SAVAGE LOOK in Artie's eyes FRIGHTENED me, but after he left I wrote him off as a bitter, somewhat hysterical DREAMER! And for the next few days he didn't show up at all...
I CAN'T STAND THIS MUCH LONGER! I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED TO ARTIE-- IF ONLY SOMETHING WOULD HAPPEN!!

YOU'VE GOT TO HELP ME, RUTH! DO AS I SAY AND YOU WON'T BE SORRY! TAKE THIS BOX AND PLAY INNOCENT!!
ARTIE! WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THE MATTER?!

WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO WITH IT? WHAT'S IN IT?
DON'T GET NOSY, BABY - YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CURIOUS CAT! JUST TAKE CARE OF IT...OH-OH, HERE COMES A COP!!
SAY, YOUNG LADY - IS THIS MAN MOLESTING YOU?


WHY, NO...
'BYE, HONEY...SEE YOU LATER! TAKE CARE OF THE BABY...
H-MMMM!

It all happened in a matter of SECONDS - as SUDDENLY and UNEXPECTEDLY as summer lightning! After Artie rushed off, I couldn't help WONDERING about the box - and about what made it so IMPORTANT! So...
JUST ONE LITTLE PEEK CAN'T POSSIBLY HURT... I'LL JUST...OH!! IT'S FILLED WITH - MONEY!!!

I didn't know what to *THINK* or *DO*! At first, I thought I had better call a *POLICEMAN*, and give *HIM* the box! Surely there was something *WRONG* about that money! But I was *AFRAID*, so I decided to go home and *THINK* about it first...

OH, I DON'T KNOW *WHAT TO DO*! MAYBE I'D BETTER DO AS ARTIE SAID...

IS THAT THE DAME, ARTIE?

YEAH - THAT'S HER, CARL..

OH! WHO-- HELP!

ARTIE! LOOK- I HAVEN'T *DONE ANYTHING*... I DIDN'T TAKE *ANY* OF THE *MONEY*! PLEASE- *STOP* THE CAR! *LET ME OUT*!!

TAKE IT EASY, RUTH- NOTHING IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU! YOU'RE *IN* THIS NOW, TOO...

IT'S ALL HERE, BOYS- EIGHTEEN THOUSAND BUCKS! YOU USED YOUR HEAD ON THAT *BANK JOB*, ARTIE!!

BANK JOB!! LET ME OUT- *PLEASE*!! I DON'T WANT TO BE MIXED UP IN ANY ROBBERIES! *HELP*! *HE-E-E-ELP*!!

YOU'D BETTER *SHUT HER UP*, CARL- WE'RE GOIN' THRU TOWN!!

KEEP QUIET, SWEET-HEART, OR I'LL HAVE TO--

I was *TERRIFIED* to the edge of *HYSTERIA*! I was *AFRAID* of these men, especially the one named *CARL* - afraid of what they might *DO* to me!! And then, suddenly, the inside of my head felt like a Fourth of July celebration...

...DO *THIS*!!

CRACK

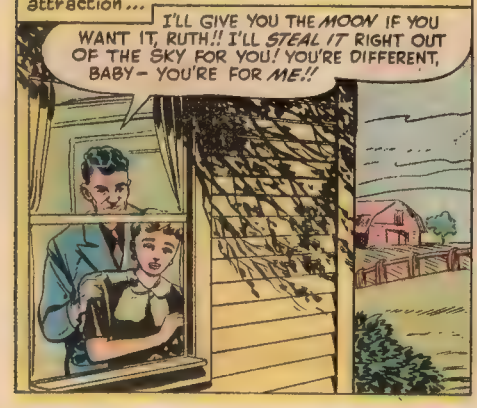
For what seemed like years, the world was a *BLACK, SOUNDLESS PLACE*! Then, as I came to, I felt *STRONG ARMS* around me, and a rugged, hard, *STRANGELY ATTRACTIVE* face came into focus...

WH-- WHERE AM-- ARTIE? OHOO... IT'S ...*YOU*!!

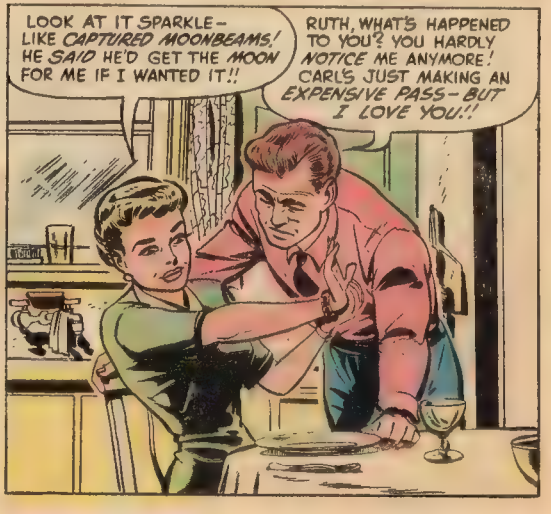
HOW DOES A *SMALL-TIMER* LIKE ARTIE RATE A *BABE* LIKE *YOU*?! I'M SORRY I HAD TO *SLUG* YOU, HONEY... I *APOLOGIZE*!!

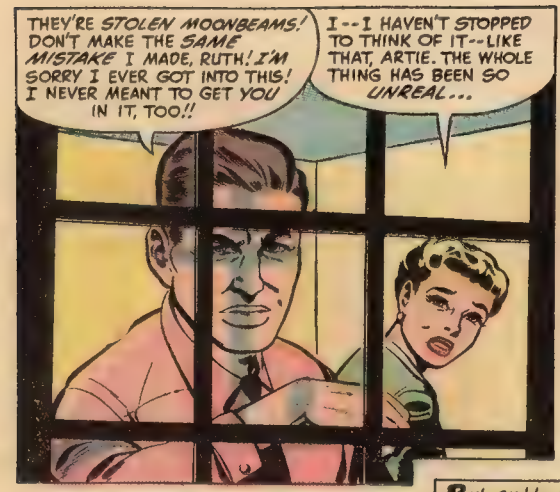
Before I could protest, Carl's lips came down *CRUSHINGLY* on mine! It was *USELESS* to struggle with him—and curiously, despite my fright, I discovered that *I DIDN'T REALLY WANT TO!!!*

Carl was as *SMOOTH* as fine oriental *SILK!!* I was *FASCINATED* by the way he spoke, the things he said!! My heart *POUNDED* with a *STRANGE COMBINATION* of apprehension and attraction...



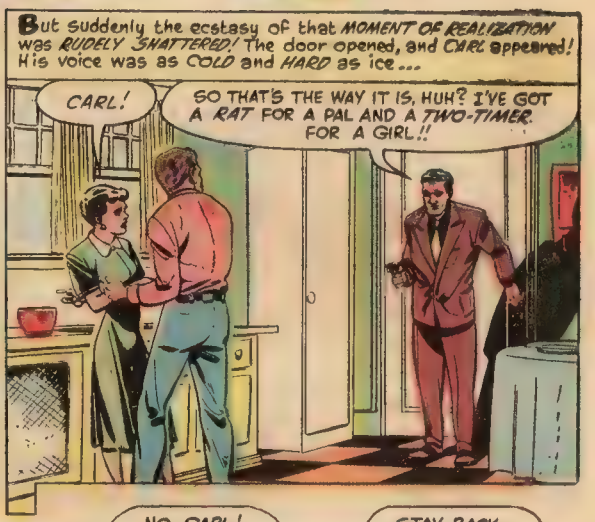
I didn't *DARE* move out of that farm house for the next few days--partly because I *FEARED* the *VIOLENCE* of those men so *TERRIBLY*--and partly because I was *HYPNOTIZED* by Carl's *GLITTERING PROMISES* of *MONEY* and *EXCITEMENT!!!*




THEY'RE STOLEN MOONBEAMS! DON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE I MADE, RUTH! I'M SORRY I EVER GOT INTO THIS! I NEVER MEANT TO GET YOU IN IT, TOO!!
I--I HAVEN'T STOPPED TO THINK OF IT--LIKE THAT, ARTIE. THE WHOLE THING HAS BEEN SO UNREAL...

BUT YOU'RE GETTING YOURSELF MORE AND MORE INVOLVED IN THIS MESS! I CAN'T JUST STAND BY HELPLESSLY AND LET YOU DO IT!!
I-I'M ALL MIXED UP, ARTIE...BUT...I KNOW YOU'RE RIGHT...I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO ANYTHING WRONG...

I NEEDED the NEARNESS of Artie to bring me back to my senses...back to REALITY!! I'd been HYPNOTIZED by Carl's TEMPTING PROMISES, by his EXPENSIVE ATTENTION... Artie was more REAL...more HONEST...
DARLING, WE CAN GET AWAY--TONIGHT! WE'LL GO TO THE POLICE! RUTH, I LOVE YOU... I LOVE YOU!!
ARTIE... DARLING...

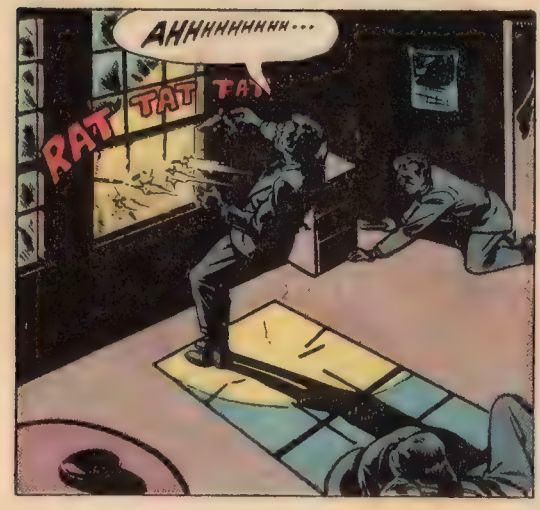

But suddenly the ecstasy of that MOMENT OF REALIZATION was RUDELY SHATTERED! The door opened, and CARL appeared! His voice was as COLD and HARD as ice...
CARL!
SO THAT'S THE WAY IT IS, HUH? I'VE GOT A RAT FOR A PAL AND A TWO-TIMER FOR A GIRL!!

CARL, WAIT! BE REASONABLE!! I WA... OW!!
WHY, YOU...
SMACK!

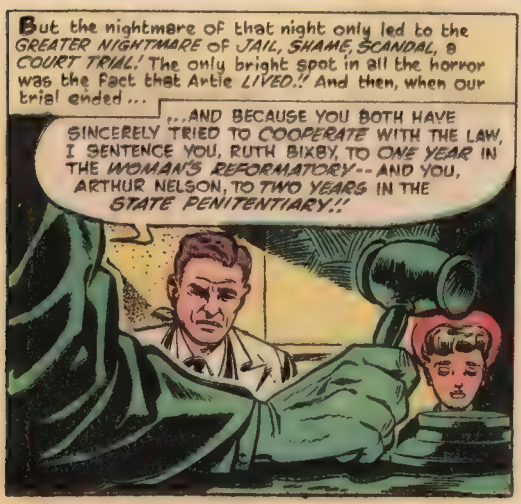
NO, CARL! DON'T!! EEEEEEEEE!!
STAY BACK, RU-UGH!

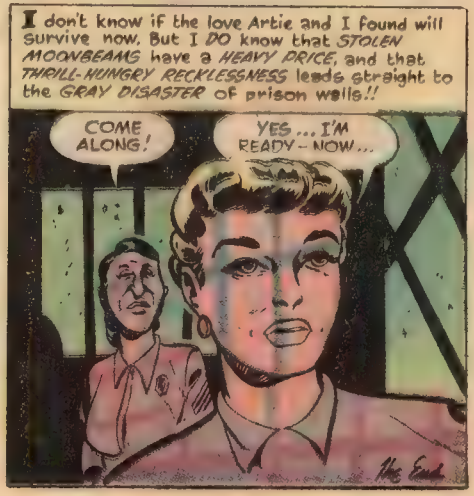
ARTIE!! OH, DARLING... (SOB-SOB)... DARLING...
SAVE THE TEARS FOR YOURSELF, BABY!! YOU'RE NEXT...
CARL! THERE'S POLICE CARS ALL OVER THE PLACE! WE'RE SURROUNDED!!

ALL RIGHT, IN THERE! COME OUT WITH YOUR HANDS UP! YOU HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE--
QUICK! DOUSE THAT LIGHT! LET THE COPS COME AND GET US!!


AHHHHHHHHH...
RAT TAT TAT

In a few short minutes, the whole NIGHTMARE was over! Dimly, I realized the SHAME and the DISGRACE of my own position... but there was only ONE THING I REALLY cared about...
HURRY, PLEASE... (SOB-SOB)... HE... HE'S STILL BREATHING...
DON'T SHOOT-- I SURRENDER...


But the nightmare of that night only led to the GREATER NIGHTMARE of JAIL, SHAME, SCANDAL, a COURT TRIAL! The only bright spot in all the horror was the fact that Artie LIVED!! And then, when our trial ended...
...AND BECAUSE YOU BOTH HAVE SINCERELY TRIED TO COOPERATE WITH THE LAW, I SENTENCE YOU, RUTH BIXBY, TO ONE YEAR IN THE WOMAN'S REFORMATORY-- AND YOU, ARTHUR NELSON, TO TWO YEARS IN THE STATE PENITENTIARY!!


I don't know if the love Artie and I found will survive now. But I DO know that STOLEN MOONBEAMS have a HEAVY PRICE, and that THRILL-HUNGRY RECKLESSNESS leads straight to the GRAY DISASTER of prison walls!!
COME ALONG!
YES... I'M READY-- NOW...
The End

THRILL TO THE ALL-TRUE STORIES OF ECSTATIC ROMANCE IN...

THE LOVE STORIES OF HI-SCHOOL DAYS ARE CAPTURED BETWEEN THE COVERS OF THIS EXCITING MAGAZINE! THE ACHING TEMPTATIONS, THE POUNDING PASSIONS, THE GLOWING SWEETNESS-- THEY'RE ALL HERE -- ALL TRUE-- ALL FOR **YOU**!

NOW ON SALE!

The Whole World is SHOUTING FIRST LOVE is first on our magazine HIT PARADE!

YOU MUST READ THESE DARING CONFESSIONS!

WATCH FOR THIS EXCITING ISSUE!

NOW ON SALE *Get Your Copy!*

HOMECOMING—

That day that should have been the happiest of my life—the day my Ted came home from service—

My fingers shook so badly while I was dressing to go to his home for dinner that I could hardly button the buttons and zip the zippers! My heart kept beating the same tune over and over—Ted . . . Ted . . . Ted is *home* . . . *safe* . . .

I had loved Ted Russell ever since we'd been in a play together in fifth grade, and stammered and blushed our way through a Shakespearian love scene! And Ted felt the same way about me! There had never been anyone else for either of us . . . there never *could* be anyone else! All the time Ted was in Korea, I hadn't even *looked* at another boy!

"What will he *say*??? What will he *do*??" I thought breathlessly as I rang the Russell's door-bell. But I needn't have worried! Because all he said was, "Hello, Nora—it's good to see you!" And he didn't *do* anything! He didn't even *kiss me!!*

All during the meal I searched his face with hungry, pleading eyes, looking for a sign, a message—that wasn't there! Ted's face remained impassive. He was older, kind of tired-looking, and very silent. Even Mr. and Mrs. Russell noticed that something was wrong! They tried to make light, cheerful conversation—tried a little desperately, I think—but *I* was too stunned and heartbroken to respond and Ted just *wouldn't*.

Finally, I couldn't stand it any more! I mumbled some kind of a fantastic excuse, and rushed from the table. Outside, on the Russell's porch, I just leaned my head on the railing, and cried my heart out. Every *hope* . . . every *dream* . . . every *plan* was washed away in that flood of tears!!

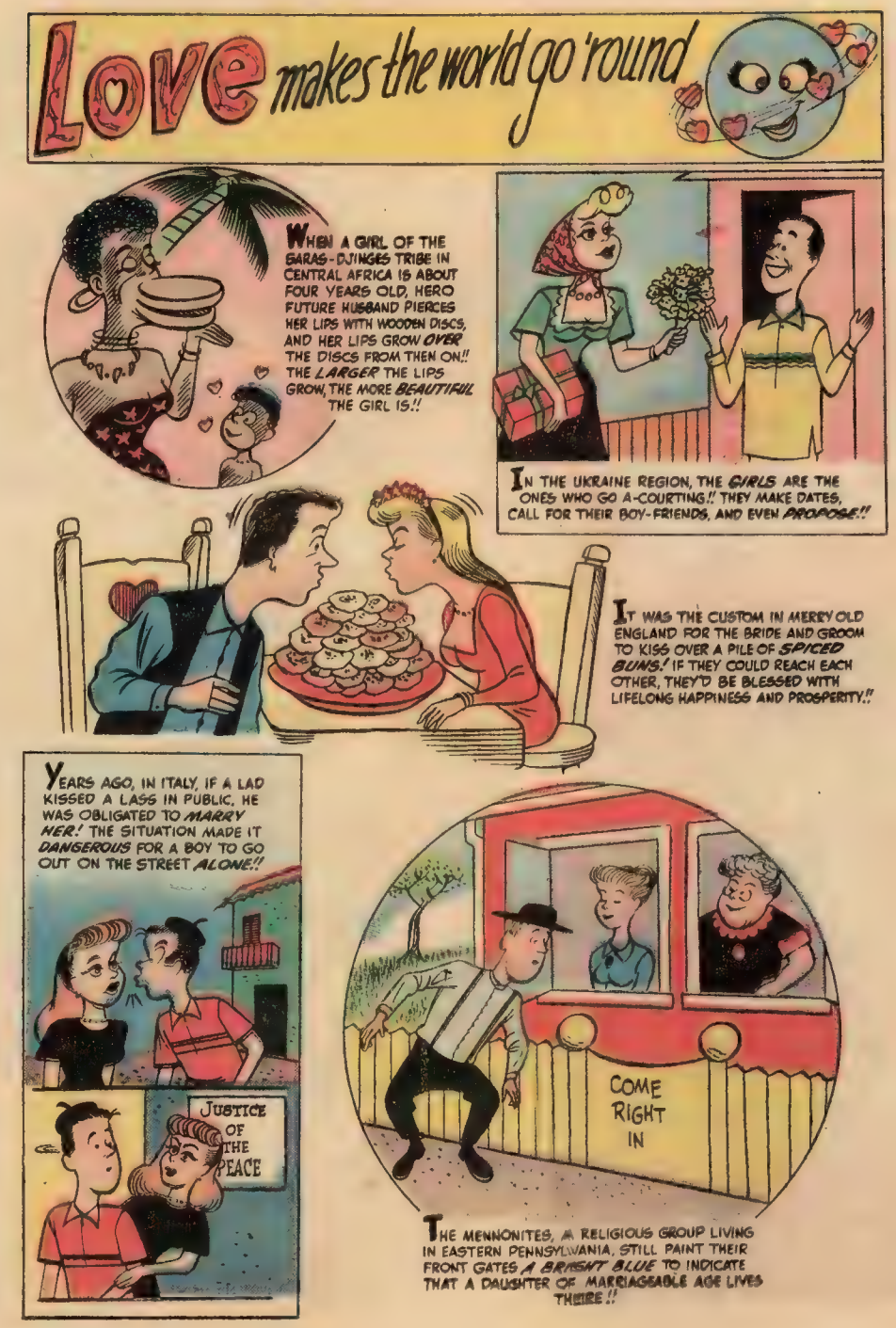
Then, suddenly, Ted was there, his arm tentatively encircling my shoulders, almost as if he were—afraid to touch me! The sight of his white, pain-twisted face drove every other thought from my mind! "TED! What's wrong?" I whispered. "Are you *sick* . . . ?"

"Just an attack of—of jungle fever!" he muttered thickly. "Passes in a couple of minutes . . . didn't want you to know . . . didn't want to saddle you with an *invalid* . . ."

"Ted! Oh, Ted—you precious idiot! Don't you know *I love you?* There are drugs, treatments, medicines for such things! How could you *ever* have thought it would *matter?*"

"Nora—Nora, darling—I've missed you so!" he murmured tenderly.

"Welcome home, my love!" I answered, raising my lips for his kiss.



PARTY GIRL!

I met Agnes Moore when I got my first job, right after graduating from high school. From the very start, I thought Agnes was simply wonderful! She was everything I wanted to be—and wasn't! Gay, sophisticated, lovely to look at, and, oh, so sure of herself!

"I want lots of *money*, lots of beautiful and expensive *clothes*, *furs*, and *jewelry!*" she told me. "And I intend to get them while I'm still young, to enjoy them! Just wait till I get my own apartment—and then watch my smoke!"

Getting an apartment of her own was a favorite dream of Agnes'. So I wasn't surprised when she burst into the office one morning, her face wreathed in ecstatic smiles! "Marion, honey!" she whispered gleefully. "I finally got an apartment! You must come see it after work!"

She was like a kid with a new toy! Her apartment *was* lovely, and I oh-ed and ah-ed over everything! Agnes was pleased with my reaction—so pleased that she invited me to double-date with her that same night!

I guess I don't have to tell you how thrilled I was! My date was really cute, and the four of us had a wonderful evening. After that first time, we double-dated constantly. Agnes was the one who arranged the dates, and we seldom went out with the same boys twice! I used to marvel at the never-ending supply of males she seemed to have, but Agnes would only laugh and answer airily, "Well, one of these days I'll pick a *winner* and live on Easy Street for the rest of my days!"

And then I met Dan Wallace. When Agnes introduced me to him, my heart did flip-flops! The whole evening was star-dusted—until Dan said to me casually, "Maybe it's none of my business, but I've been wondering, why a girl like *you* is on the party circuit! How come, Marion?"

"Party circuit?" I echoed. "I don't know what you mean!"

"There are girls like you and Agnes in every city," Dan answered quietly. "Girls who are *good company* for a guy like me who's here on business—*temporarily!* Only *you* seem more like the type who'd be waiting for him *at home!*"

Suddenly I wanted to run away, to hide my shame! So that's what I'd become—a PARTY GIRL for visiting firemen who wanted to do the town! The thought made me sick!

I never went out with Agnes again. She's still on the party circuit, I hear. I guess she always will be. As for me—well—maybe someday another Dan Wallace will come into my life—to stay!

WAR IS HELL!

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD---HERE ARE THE GRIM, TRUE TALES OF OUR FIGHTING MEN...

BLASTING ACTION!

BLOOD AND GUTS!

FOX HOLE GLORY!

DON'T MISS... THE BIG 2nd ISSUE ON SALE SEPT.5th

LOVE WAS MY DESTROYER

I TRUSTED IN LOVE WITH ALL MY HEART! I THOUGHT THERE WAS NO SACRIFICE TOO GREAT, NO RISK TOO DANGEROUS FOR THE MAN I LOVED! BUT THEN I DISCOVERED THAT LOVE CAN MEAN BETRAYAL, TOO!

YOU'LL LOVE ME ALWAYS, WON'T YOU, HUGH- AS MUCH AS I LOVE YOU?

OF COURSE, PAT-- NOW THAT YOU'VE CARRIED OUT ALL MY INSTRUCTIONS!!

Washington, D.C. is a place where BIG THINGS happen, a place CROWDED with men and women of all sorts. Like thousands of other girls, I took an office job there, and was soon swallowed up in the hustle and bustle...

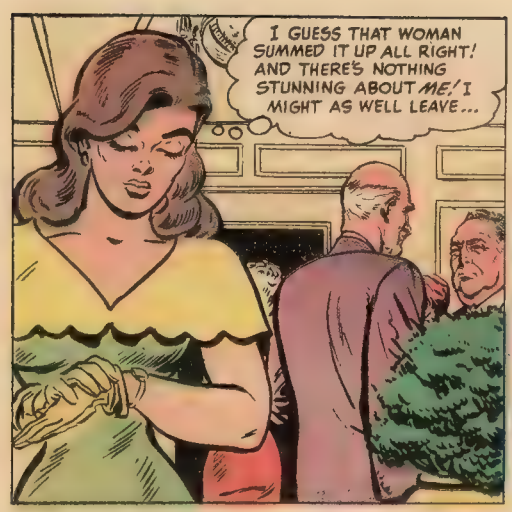
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE COME TO THIS PARTY! I DON'T KNOW A SOUL, AND NO ONE WANTS TO KNOW ME!

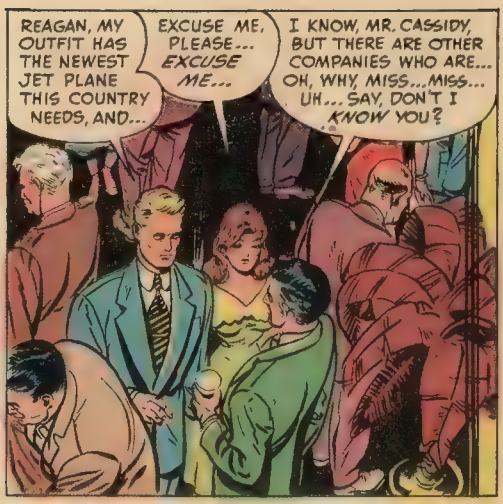
...SO THEN I TOLD THE SENATOR MY IDEAS...

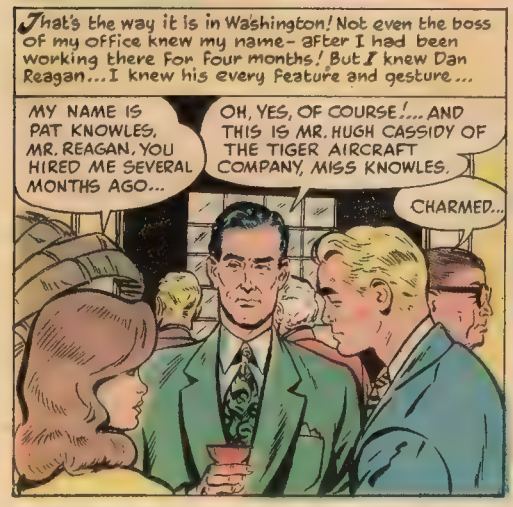
DARLING, THAT'S A STUNNING DRESS!

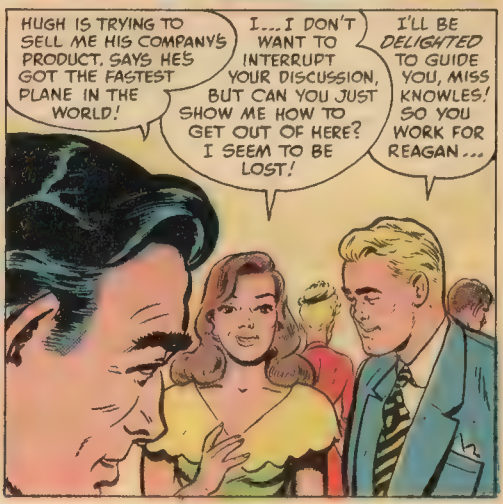
WELL, MY DEAR- A WOMAN HAS TO LOOK STUNNING IN A TOWN WHERE THE FEMALES OUTNUMBER THE MALES 3 TO 1!

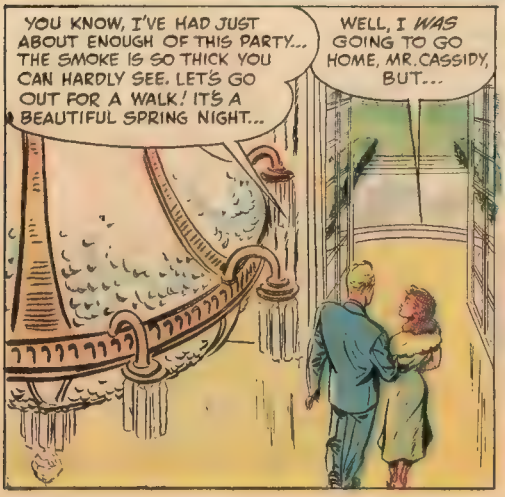
I TELL YOU, GEORGE, THIS KOREAN SITUATION IS...

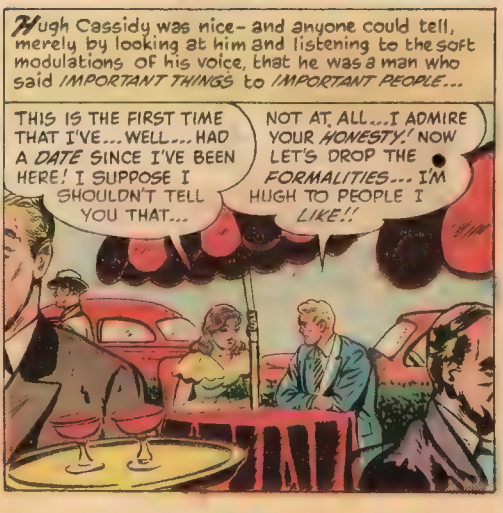

I GUESS THAT WOMAN SUMMED IT UP ALL RIGHT! AND THERE'S NOTHING STUNNING ABOUT *ME!* I MIGHT AS WELL LEAVE...


REAGAN, MY OUTFIT HAS THE NEWEST JET PLANE THIS COUNTRY NEEDS, AND...
EXCUSE ME, PLEASE... *EXCUSE ME...*
I KNOW, MR. CASSIDY, BUT THERE ARE OTHER COMPANIES WHO ARE... OH, WHY, MISS... MISS... UH... SAY, DON'T I *KNOW* YOU?


That's the way it is in Washington! Not even the boss of my office knew my name - after I had been working there for four months! But I knew Dan Reagan... I knew his every feature and gesture...
MY NAME IS PAT KNOWLES, MR. REAGAN. YOU HIRED ME SEVERAL MONTHS AGO...
OH, YES, OF COURSE!... AND THIS IS MR. HUGH CASSIDY OF THE TIGER AIRCRAFT COMPANY, MISS KNOWLES.
CHARMED...


HUGH IS TRYING TO SELL ME HIS COMPANY'S PRODUCT. SAYS HE'S GOT THE FASTEST PLANE IN THE WORLD!
I... I DON'T WANT TO INTERRUPT YOUR DISCUSSION, BUT CAN YOU JUST SHOW ME HOW TO GET OUT OF HERE? I SEEM TO BE LOST!
I'LL BE *DELIGHTED* TO GUIDE YOU, MISS KNOWLES! SO YOU WORK FOR REAGAN...


YOU KNOW, I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ENOUGH OF THIS PARTY... THE SMOKE IS SO THICK YOU CAN HARDLY SEE. LET'S GO OUT FOR A WALK! IT'S A BEAUTIFUL SPRING NIGHT...
WELL, I *WAS* GOING TO GO HOME, MR. CASSIDY, BUT...


Hugh Cassidy was nice - and anyone could tell, merely by looking at him and listening to the soft modulations of his voice, that he was a man who said *IMPORTANT THINGS* to *IMPORTANT PEOPLE*...
THIS IS THE FIRST TIME THAT I'VE... WELL... HAD A *DATE* SINCE I'VE BEEN HERE! I SUPPOSE I SHOULDN'T TELL YOU THAT...
NOT AT ALL... I ADMIRE YOUR *HONESTY!* NOW LET'S DROP THE *FORMALITIES*... I'M HUGH TO PEOPLE I *LIKE!!*

We knew how to show a girl a GOOD TIME! Even the cherry blossoms seemed to bloom ESPECIALLY for him!

IT'S LIKE BEING UNDER A PINK SKY! THESE PETALS FEEL LIKE SILK! THIS HAS BEEN A WONDERFUL EVENING, HUGH!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT WOULD MAKE IT EVEN MORE WONDERFUL, PAT? IT WOULD BE...

...THIS!!

His lips were as GENTLE and INVITING as the cherry blossoms, his voice was SOFT and COMPELLING...but somehow that kiss DESTROYED my rosy glow of happiness...

PAT...PAT... WHAT'S THE MATTER? WHY DO YOU LOOK LIKE THAT?

I DON'T KNOW, HUGH ...I SUPPOSE THIS WAS THE TIME AND PLACE TO KISS ME...BUT IT ALL SEEMED SO CALCULATED...SO ARTIFICIAL...

I'M SORRY, PAT...I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU WERE TOO INTELLIGENT— TOO SENSITIVE FOR MY CRUDE LOVE-MAKING!!

THERE'S NOTHING CRUDE ABOUT YOU, HUGH! BUT I JUST CAN'T BELIEVE THAT WAS A SINCERE KISS...WE ONLY KNOW EACH OTHER A FEW HOURS...

I CAN'T BLAME YOU FOR THINKING THAT— BUT I'LL SHOW YOU I AM SINCERE!! FIRST OF ALL, WILL YOU HAVE DINNER WITH ME TOMORROW NIGHT?

I'D LOVE TO!

All the next day my head SWAM with the remembered perfume of the cherry blossoms. —with my thoughts of HUGH!! I wondered if he would REALLY keep the date... a man like Hugh could have his pick of GORGEOUS WOMEN...

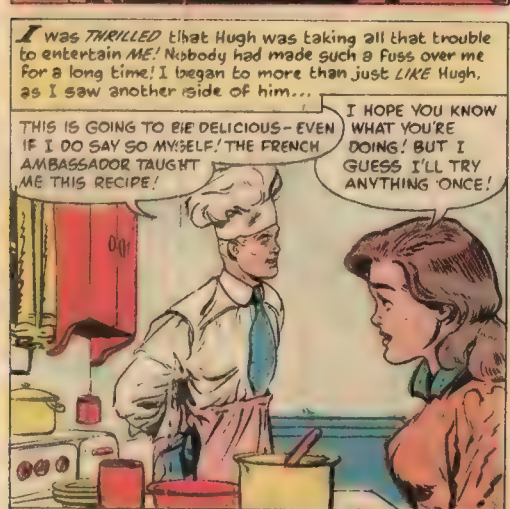
HI, PAT! SAY, THERE'S A BEAUTIFUL HUNK OF MAN WAITING FOR YOU DOWNSTAIRS!!

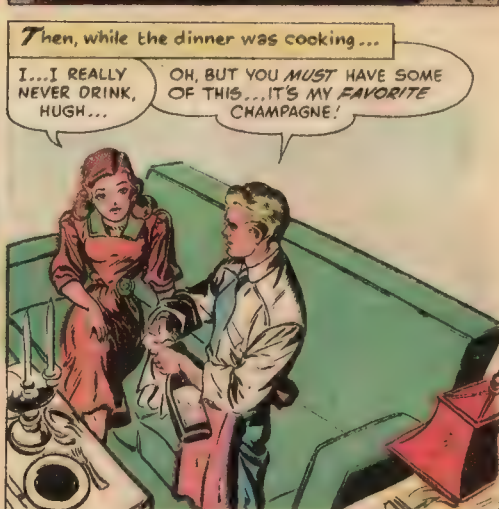
OH, HE DID COME!

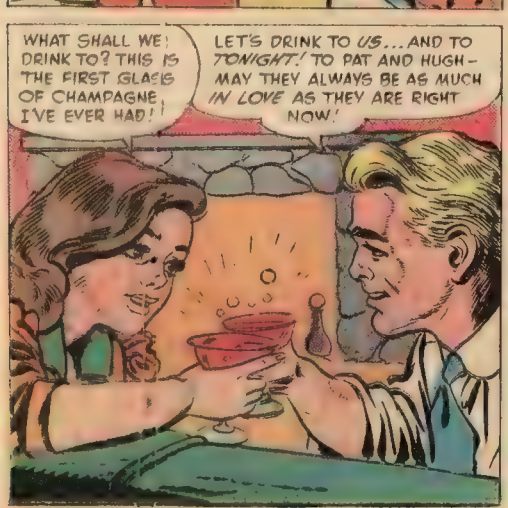
THANKS, MABEL...I KNOW!

EVENING, MISS... EVENING, MR. CASSIDY... I'LL PARK THE CAR FOR YOU.
THANK YOU, JAMISON. THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCLUSIVE HOTELS IN TOWN, PAT!
IT'S A MAGNIFICENT PLACE, HUGH!

YOU DON'T MIND HAVING DINNER IN MY APARTMENT, DO YOU, PAT? YOU SEE, I'M AN AMATEUR CHEF - AND I'D LIKE TO PREPARE SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOU TONIGHT!
EVERYTHING IS SO BEAUTIFUL, HUGH! I DON'T MIND AT ALL! BUT ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO COOK THE DINNER?


I was THRILLED that Hugh was taking all that trouble to entertain ME! Nobody had made such a fuss over me for a long time! I began to more than just LIKE Hugh, as I saw another side of him...
THIS IS GOING TO BE DELICIOUS - EVEN IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF! THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR TAUGHT ME THIS RECIPE!
I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING! BUT I GUESS I'LL TRY ANYTHING ONCE!


Then, while the dinner was cooking...
I...I REALLY NEVER DRINK, HUGH...
OH, BUT YOU MUST HAVE SOME OF THIS...IT'S MY FAVORITE CHAMPAGNE!


WHAT SHALL WE DRINK TO? THIS IS THE FIRST GLASS OF CHAMPAGNE I'VE EVER HAD!
LET'S DRINK TO US...AND TO TONIGHT! TO PAT AND HUGH - MAY THEY ALWAYS BE AS MUCH IN LOVE AS THEY ARE RIGHT NOW!

WE ARE IN LOVE, AREN'T WE, DARLING? IT ISN'T JUST MOONLIGHT AND CHERRY BLOSSOMS NOW! PAT, YOU DO LOVE ME, DON'T YOU?
HUGH... DARLING...

Yes, I WAS in love with Hugh! My pulses throbbed wildly as he took me into his arms... as his lips came down on mine...

HUGH, DARLING... THE DINNER! IT MUST BE SPOILED...

THERE'LL BE OTHER DINNERS, DARLING - LOTS OF THEM! AND NOTHING WILL EVER BE SPOILED, AS LONG AS I HAVE YOU...

When Hugh took me home that night, I FLOATED along on CLOUDS! And the next morning, I woke up with a SONG in my heart!!

"OH, WHAT A BEAUTIFUL MORNING!"... BUT EVERY MORNING WILL BE BEAUTIFUL NOW THAT I KNOW HUGH LOVES ME...

YOU'RE CERTAINLY NO RAVING BEAUTY, PAT KNOWLES! HOW COULD YOU BE LUCKY ENOUGH TO RATE A MAN LIKE HUGH CASSIDY!

HEY, PAT - QUIT THE DAY-DREAMING! WE'LL BE LATE FOR WORK...

Hugh and I saw each other almost every night, and each time I fell DEEPER AND DEEPER IN LOVE WITH HIM! He took me to the most exciting and exclusive parties and places in Washington...

I NEVER THOUGHT I'D HOLD AN ANGEL IN MY ARMS!!

YOU MAKE ME FEEL LIKE AN ANGEL, DARLING!

... to the most famous night clubs...

ISN'T THAT HUGH CASSIDY OF TIGER AIRCRAFT?

YES, AND THAT'S THE GIRL WHO SEEMS TO HAVE HIM ALL SEWED UP!

I never asked Hugh about his past, about other girls he'd known! I didn't want him to COMPARE me with them... I didn't want ANYTHING to CHANGE or HAPPEN TO our love! Then one night...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, HUGH? YOU SEEM SO QUIET AND WORRIED TONIGHT!

I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT US, PAT...ABOUT MAKING US A PERMANENT COMBINATION! IF I COULD PULL OFF THAT BUSINESS DEAL WITH YOUR BOSS, WE COULD GET MARRIED!

BUT I DON'T CARE ABOUT MONEY, DARLING...JUST HAVING YOU WILL MAKE ME RICHER THAN A QUEEN!

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE, PAT. FIRST I HAVE TO SECURE MY POSITION WITH TIGER AIRCRAFT! I'VE GOT TO PULL OFF SOMETHING BIG! AND YOU COULD HELP ME, DARLING!!

YOU HAVE ACCESS TO REAGAN'S FILES! IF YOU'D FIND OUT WHAT THE OTHER COMPANIES ARE PLANNING, I COULD BEAT THEM TO THE PUNCH!!

BUT, HUGH—THAT WOULD BE... STEALING! THOSE ARE SECRET FILES!

NO, IT WOULDN'T, PAT! SOMEBODY'S GOT TO GET THE CONTRACT— WHY NOT TIGER AIRCRAFT? HONEY, IT MEANS MY WHOLE FUTURE!

I STILL DON'T LIKE THE IDEA, BUT...IF IT MEANS THAT MUCH TO YOU, HUGH...

I KNEW I COULD COUNT ON YOU, DARLING!

I didn't sleep much that night. I realized how much that contract meant to Hugh ...and indirectly, to ME, too! But deep down in my heart, I knew it was WRONG to get it THAT WAY!! And the very next day...

OH, MISS KNOWLES—WILL YOU COME INTO MY OFFICE, PLEASE?

WHA--OH, YES, MR. REAGAN—RIGHT AWAY, SIR!

Of course, if Dan Reagan had invited me to dinner A MONTH BEFORE, I'd have LEAPED at the chance! But now I was in love with HUGH, and I was concerned only with what I had to do for HIM that night...

All the way to Hugh's apartment that night, my heart beat like a SAVAGE tom-tom, and my nerves SCREAMED like little WILD BEASTS! WRONG...WRONG... WRONG, they kept signaling, and yet...

All the way home from Hugh's apartment, I felt as if I were being *FOLLOWED!* I felt, too, that I had *LOST* all sense of *HONOR* and *DECENCY!* Then, at my door, I discovered that I had lost *SOMETHING ELSE* too!!!

MY SHOULDER BAG!! IT... IT'S *GONE!!* OH, NO... *THE PAPERS ARE IN IT!!*

TAKE ME TO "THE MANLEY ARMS!!" AS *FAST* AS YOU CAN GET THERE!!

OKAY, MISS...

WHY, PAT, DARLING... WHAT BRINGS YOU BACK *AT THIS HOUR?!*

QUICK, HUGH... LET ME IN! SOMETHING *TERRIBLE* HAS HAPPENED!!

TREMBLINGLY, I told him what had happened! We turned his apartment *UPSIDE DOWN,* but *WE DIDN'T FIND MY BAG!!*

YOU HAVE *LOST* IT... IT'S NOT *ANYWHERE* IN THE APARTMENT! HOW COULD YOU BE SO *STUPID,* PAT?!!

OH, HUGH -- PLEASE DON'T *SCOLD!* I'M SO *FRIGHTENED!!* MY *NAME* IS IN IT... WHAT IF SOMEONE *FINDS* IT AND TAKES IT TO THE *POLICE*... WHAT WOULD WE DO *THEN???*

WHAT DO YOU MEAN -- *WE?* *I'M* NOT GOING TO BE IMPLICATED IN THIS MESS BECAUSE OF *YOUR IDIOCY!!* NOT AFTER ALL THE *WORK* I'VE HAD TO DO TO GET WHERE I AM NOW!!

Suddenly it all hit me - the *WHOLE, UGLY REALIZATION* of the *FOOL* I'd been played for, of the *SHALLOWNESS* of Hugh's love - if it ever *HAD BEEN* love!! I saw myself clearly at the center of a *DIABOLICAL PLOT*...

IT WILL BE *MY* WORD AGAINST YOURS!! AND *WHO* DO YOU THINK THEY'LL *BELIEVE* -- HUGH CASSIDY OF TIGER AIRCRAFT -- OR A *STUPID LITTLE CLERK*...

DON'T SAY ANY MORE, HUGH! I UNDERSTAND... *EVERYTHING!!* GOODBYE...

I ran into the night, NUMB with the SHOCK of LOST LOVE- NUMB with the REALIZATION that I had been nothing more to Hugh Cassidy than a KEY to unlock a GOVERNMENT FILE-BOX- a key that could be DISCARDED!!

THERE'S ONLY ONE THING I CAN DO NOW... ONE SHRED OF HONOR I CAN CLING TO!...

WELL, JOE- LOOKS LIKE WE WON'T HAVE TO BRING HER IN AFTER ALL-- EVEN THOUGH WE TAILED HER ALL EVENING!

...YOU ADMIT THAT THIS IS YOUR BAG, THAT YOU TOOK THE FOLDERS OUT OF THE CONFIDENTIAL FILES? WHO PUT YOU UP TO IT?!

YES... I ADMIT EVERYTHING... BUT I CAN'T IMPLICATE ANYONE ELSE...

RIGHT THIS WAY MR. REAGAN..

SHE CAME IN HERSELF, MR. REAGAN-- ADMITS EVERYTHING, BUT WON'T NAME HER ACCOMPLICE!!

I GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR MORE INTELLIGENCE, MISS KNOWLES. HOW COULD YOU BE SUCH A WILLING DUPE FOR A MAN LIKE HUGH CASSIDY?!!

I didn't even WONDER how Dan Reagan knew about Hugh! I was too OVERWHELMED by the ANGER and HURT and DISAPPOINTMENT I saw in his eyes!! I felt WEAK and DIZZY as I HEARD...

WE KNOW IT'S CASSIDY, TOO, SIR! WE'VE BEEN TAILING HER! BUT WE NEED THE GIRL'S CONFIRMATION TO PROSECUTE...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THE PROSECUTION, SERGEANT! THE PAPERS MISS KNOWLES TOOK ARE WORTHLESS! WE DON'T KEEP TOP-SECRET STUFF IN OPEN FILES!

AREN'T YOU GOING TO PRESS CHARGES AGAINST EITHER ONE OF 'EM, MR. REAGAN?

NO... I'LL PERSONALLY SEE TO IT THAT HUGH CASSIDY IS FINISHED IN WASHINGTON-- AND WITH TIGER AIRCRAFT!! AS FOR MISS KNOWLES, I THINK SHE'S BEEN PUNISHED ENOUGH! I'LL TAKE HER HOME...

AT LEAST YOU HAD THE COURAGE TO CONFESS, PAT! BUT YOU OUGHT TO BE SPANKED ANYHOW, YOU LITTLE IDIOT!! NOW YOU LISTEN TO ME...

YES, DAN, I'M LISTENING...

Just as the warm sun chased away the terrors of that HORRIBLE NIGHT, the WARMTH of Dan Reagan's UNDERSTANDING chased away my HORRIBLE MEMORIES of Hugh Cassidy and his FALSE LOVE! Things were going to be DIFFERENT now...

The End

ASK JANE JONES

Dear Jane,

I have been going with a married man for about two months. He wants to divorce his wife, and marry me. But they have a little boy about a year old.

What should I do? I am 16.

H. J., Chattanooga, Tenn.

In your heart, you already know the answer! Your whole life lies ahead of you. Don't ruin it by committing such a great moral wrong! For your own sake, and for the sake of the innocent child involved, break off with this man immediately!

Dear Jane,

I'm 16, and the boy I love is 20. He is in the Army and wants me to wait 2½ years for him. Do you think I'm too young to make such a promise?

T.B., Burbank, Calif.

This is a problem that only your own heart can solve. Two and a half years is a long time, and there would be many lonely hours for you. Your love must be very strong—stronger than anything else in the world—to survive that loneliness. Only YOU know if YOUR love IS that strong.

Dear Jane,

One Sunday when my boy-friend thought I wasn't going to the show, he sat with another girl. I saw them, and told him we were through.

Now he wants to go back together. I still love him, but all my friends say I'd be a fool to do it. What do you think?

W.B., Denver, Colo.

Friends mean well, but they are often wrong! You still care for this boy, so why not give him another chance?

Do YOU have a love problem? Need honest, realistic advice? Then ASK JANE JONES! Write to:

FIRST ROMANCE
1860 Broadway
New York 23, N. Y.

MY BLIND DATE

How did YOUR blind date turn out? Was it a DREAM-DATE or a DRIP-DATE? Did it start you on the road to ROMANCE—or did it reach the END OF THE LINE by midnight?

Remember, FIRST ROMANCE pays $2.00 for each true story printed in this column! Write to:

MY BLIND DATE CONTEST
FIRST ROMANCE
1860 Broadway
New York 23, N. Y.

When my girl-friend, Anita, told me she had a blind date for me, I accepted gladly. She said he was nice, new in town, and didn't know anyone but her and her boy-friend.

So, when the four of us got into the car, I was sure we were going to a movie or a nice night-club. But after an hour of riding, my date, Tony, told me he was broke. So I loaned him five dollars which he promised to return to me the next day. After that, we had lots of fun, and Tony and I made a date for the next night.

All this happened two years ago. I haven't seen Tony since—or my five dollars either!

B.L.R., Amarillo, Texas

? ? ?

The first date I ever had was a blind date! My girl-friend fixed it up, and I thought he was the cutest boy I had ever seen.

I didn't think he could ever like me, but we went out several times after that first date. Then I didn't hear from him again until six months later. He was in the Navy, and he told me he had fallen in love with me the first time he saw me, but he'd been too bashful to say anything! So he'd tried to forget me, but couldn't.

We are going steady now—as the result of a blind date!!

J.C., Savannah, Ga.

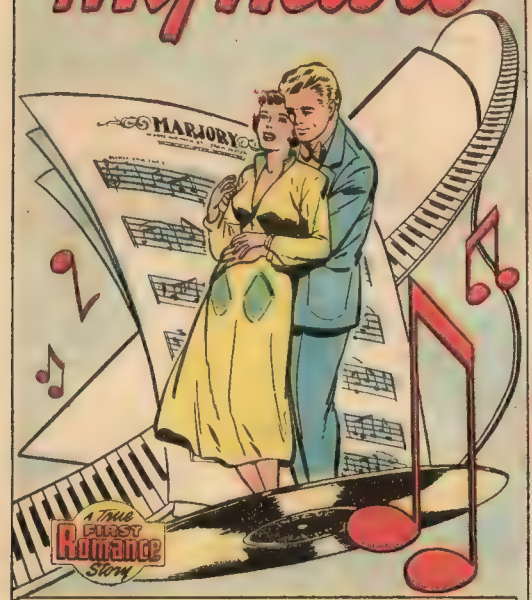
? ? ?

Imagine my surprise when my first blind date turned out to be the boy I'd had a crush on in the third grade!

During the evening, we talked over old times and found we had a lot in common. We have seen each other constantly since then—making up for lost time!

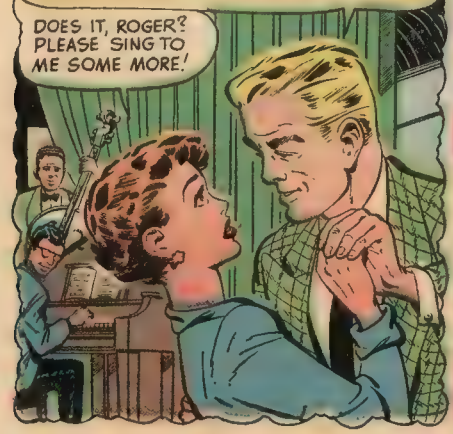
P.T., Topeka, Kansas

"Song in My Heart"



"It was OUR SONG, Roger's and mine... the love song that formed the background of our romance...THE THEME THAT BROKE MY HEART!"

It's all over and done... and I NEVER think of Roger any more... never, except when I hear THE SONG they're playing... it was 'OUR SONG' then... the theme they were playing that first night right here when Mark introduced me to ROGER MELTON...



We stopped then and he took my hand and led me into the shadows... we were alone with the night and the stars... and the music. He slipped his arm around me and murmured...

"...IN LOVE... OH, MARJORY, YOU'RE LOVELY... MARJORY, SAY YOU'RE MINE..." ...MARJORY, I DO LOVE YOU! I LOVE YOU SO MUCH IT HURTS!

OH, ROGER, ROGER, MY DARLING!

...and then his mouth was on mine, kissing me hard... and my heart was bursting in ecstasy... I was in love... IN LOVE!!

it really became OUR song then. We'd always ask Dolph and the trio to play it...

I KNOW! I KNOW! YOU WANT TO HEAR 'MARJORY.' DON'T YOU EVER GET SICK OF IT?!

NOPE!

But... I hardly think of those things anymore... ALL FORGOTTEN except when they play 'OUR SONG'... the trio was playing it the night Roger asked me to MARRY HIM." There's our song, pet... just yours and mine," he said... and then he PROPOSED!

YES, MY DARLING!! YES! YES! FOREVER AND EVER!

Pretty memories... and some NOT so pretty... like the night we... we ENDED it! Roger wasn't making too much and I thought we should wait to get married... but he disagreed. As the weeks rushed by, the more I'd try to REASON WITH HIM, the more UNREASONABLE he got...

BUT WE JUST CAN'T, ROGER! WHAT KIND OF LIFE WOULD IT BE FOR US? ONE ROOM IN A WALKUP?

...MAYBE YOU'D LIKE A PALACE... PEOPLE HAVE GOTTEN MARRIED ON LESS, YOU KNOW! PEOPLE IN LOVE, THAT IS!

OH, ROGER! NOW DON'T START THAT AGAIN!! I'M SICK OF--

YES! AND SO AM I!! HA! LISTEN TO WHAT THEY'RE PLAYING! OUR SONG! YEAH! AND IT FITS! "WE WON'T HAVE A MANSION, WE'LL LIVE IN A TENT... BUT, WE'VE GOT EACH OTHER, MARJORY AND WE'LL..." PAH!! I'M SORRY, BUT... GOODBYE!

That was the last I saw of Roger... he turned and walked out, taking my heart with him... taking the only REAL happiness I'd ever known...

"AND, MARJORY, YOU'LL NEVER BE LONELY--"

HUH?... HEY, ROGER, WHERE YA GOIN'?!

I was MISERABLE... I called his house but Roger was never in... and then Mark told me he had LEFT TOWN and had taken a new job. This was IT then. The love of my life was OVER and DONE. I tried to be PHILOSOPHICAL about it, but that song kept HAUNTING me... and hearing it would drive me FRANTIC!

WILL YOU PLEASE SHUT OFF THAT RADIO!!

HUH? OKAY! OKAY! DON'T GET EXCITED! I THOUGHT YOU LIKED THAT TUNE!

Mark was grand... GOOD OLD MARK! He tried his best to snap me out of the blues... he kept pestering me to go out and forget. But it was NO USE... I'd be having a good time and then they'd start playing... THAT SONG...

MARJORY! HONEY!

OH, MARK!! I C--CAN'T...

After that I used to stay in my room, playing our song OVER and OVER. I'd relive all those happy moments we'd shared... remembering his eyes... his funny little laugh... the way he'd held me close...

I'VE GOTTEN OVER IT... I GUESS A PERSON CAN GET OVER ANYTHING. MARK HAS HELPED ME A LOT. HE'S A GRAND FELLOW AND I'M VERY FOND OF HIM. HE INVITED ME TO DOLPH'S TONIGHT FOR A SPECIAL REASON. I THINK HE'S GOING TO ASK ME TO MARRY HIM.

...AND WHY SHOULDN'T I?... ROGER IS OUT OF MY LIFE COMPLETELY. EVEN WHEN THEY PLAY THAT SONG... LIKE THEY'RE PLAYING IT NOW... SEE? IT... IT DOESN'T MATTER ANY MORE... I... I OH!

"...I'M SO VERY MUCH IN LOVE... ♪♪ OH, MARJORY, YOU'RE LOVELY... MARJORY, SAY YOU'RE MINE..." ♪♪

MARJORY!... DARLING!... MARK HAS PROMISED NOT TO YELL IF I ASK YOU FOR A DANCE... SO... MAY I HAVE THE PLEASURE?

ROGER! I--I'D BE DELIGHTED TO DANCE, D-DEAREST.

"IT HAPPENED JUST SO FAST... ♪ ♪ TWO PEOPLE YOUNG AND GAY... MARJORY, HE WHISPERED, I'VE FOUND YOU AT LONG LAST..." ♪

THE END

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